

# Department of Justice High-Risk Metropolitan Area Interoperability Assistance Project *St. Louis, Missouri*



## Addressing Interoperability

The Department of Justice (DOJ) Wireless Management Office (WMO) has been working toward improving long-term federal interagency communications across the Nation. As an interim step, and as a response to a request from the House/Senate CJS Appropriations Subcommittee staff, the DOJ WMO has been leading the High-Risk Metropolitan Area Interoperability Assistance Project to provide targeted cities with basic and immediate interagency communications capabilities among local, state, and federal agencies during emergency response. Twenty-five cities were selected using criteria that included perceived risk and population size. As stakeholders in 1 of the 25 cities, St. Louis metropolitan area, local, state, and federal public safety agencies have been working collaboratively with the DOJ WMO to address basic interoperable communications.

## Participating Agencies

Partnership among St. Louis area local, state, and federal public safety agencies has been instrumental in the development of comprehensive interoperability solution sets. Participating agencies have included—

- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives
- Drug Enforcement Administration
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Lambert-St. Louis International Airport
- St. Charles County
- St. Clair County (Illinois)
- St. Louis County Police Department
- St. Louis Fire Department
- St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department
- U.S. Coast Guard
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- U.S. Marshals Service
- U.S. Postal Inspection Service
- U.S. Secret Service

## Key Successes

DOJ and area stakeholders have planned to successfully achieve basic interoperability and emergency response communications improvements in the St. Louis metropolitan area through the implementation of a cross banded interoperability solution. The solution will support the use of existing communications resources and provide connectivity between disparate radio system users. Additionally, in the course of meeting this project's interoperability goals, stakeholders were able to expand the working relationships among local, state, and federal agencies to resolve interoperability objectives for the area.

The solution bridges very high frequency (VHF), ultra high frequency (UHF) and expands on existing 800 megahertz (MHz) interoperability resources in “calling” and “tactical” configurations. The VHF (narrowband) and UHF components will provide wide area coverage throughout the metropolitan St. Louis area. The 800 MHz portion will be simulcast and utilize the ICALL and ITAC frequencies to allow for access by any 800 MHz users. Under this configuration, users in VHF, UHF or 800 MHz would utilize the “calling” channel for initial event coordination and then switch operations to the “tactical” channel. These two resources provide access to all VHF (narrowband), UHF and 800

MHz users to coordinate emergency response or on scene operations.

The VHF and UHF equipment will be maintained by the FBI. One of the VHF resources will also serve as a federal interoperability channel. The federal interoperability channel will provide a common frequency for all federal VHF narrowband users to coordinate with local and state agencies or support federal only operations in an encrypted mode. The 800 MHz equipment provided by DOJ will be maintained by St. Charles County and the City of St. Louis.

When implemented, this solution will provide interoperable communications between local, state and federal agencies in the VHF, UHF and 800 MHz bands whether local to the St. Louis area or deployed from across the country. This solution also takes advantage of and leverages existing 800 MHz interoperable communications equipment installed in St. Clair County (Illinois) as part of the Urban Area Security Initiatives federal government grant process.

To address management issues related to the new interoperability equipment, DOJ is working with several stakeholders to develop standard operating procedures (SOP) to outline the use of the cross banded communications equipment and to ensure proper operation of those resources. Assistance will also include the development of interoperability resource guides to serve as quick references for public safety personnel.

## Moving Forward

The cooperation and support between participating agencies and DOJ WMO provided scalable solutions designed to give additional agencies access to the interoperability solutions. Sustained operations, maintenance, and support of these interoperability solutions will be coordinated by key stakeholders. These efforts, along with stakeholder support, will ensure continuity in addressing interoperable communications among public safety agencies in the St. Louis metropolitan area.

The interoperability solutions are expected to be fully functional by the end of 2006.

## Contact Information

If you would like to know more about this initiative and the interoperability solutions, please contact—

### VHF, UHF and 800 MHz bridge and Federal Interoperability Channel

Ken Roth  
FBI  
(314) 589-2702  
kroth@leo.gov